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First School Solar-Power System in West Virginia Dedicated

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MOUNDSVILLE, W.Va., May 15, 2000 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ -- West Virginia's first school to install a solar electricity system dedicated it today in a colorful fanfare of songs and skits about the sun and speeches about the system's educational value.

Washington Lands Elementary School installed the system through the Learning from Light! program, a cooperative effort of energy suppliers, federal and state governments, local communities and other partners to help schools worldwide install solar energy systems and teach their students about energy resources.

The solar electricity system was funded by American Electric Power's Kammer-Mitchell power plant, which is a Partner In Education with the school.

The school, with approximately 365 students, also is the first school in the state to qualify for the U.S. Department of Energy's Million Solar Roofs and Energy Smart Schools initiatives.

Speakers at the dedication ceremony included West Virginia Gov. Cecil Underwood; Susan Guard of the U.S. Department of Energy, program manager for Million Solar Roofs; Nick Zervos, superintendent of Marshall County Schools; Dale Heydlauff, vice president - environmental affairs for American Electric Power (NYSE: AEP); Stuart Solomon, AEP-West Virginia president; and Greg Massey, general manager of Kammer-Mitchell Plant.

The AstroPower system installed at Washington Lands Elementary School is a 1,000-watt system consisting of two panels measuring 84-by-96 inches each. The system is mounted on the ground and electrically connected to the school building. Internet-based software developed by AEP, called Datapult(SM), allows students, teachers and others to click on to www.aep.com/environment/solar to track the school's energy demand and the amount of energy supplied by the solar panels.

Enhanced math and science comprehension among students is a desired outcome of the installation and the network created on AEP's web site.

Million Solar Roofs is a voluntary effort to increase use of solar energy systems and build market demand to improve the economy and the environment. Its goal is installation of 1 million solar energy systems in the United States by 2010.

The Energy Smart Schools program brings together public and private organizations to reduce school energy bills while providing comfortable classrooms.

Organizations collaborating on the Learning from Light! program at Washington Lands School have included: AEP; Foundation for Environmental Education; U.S. Department of Energy; Ohio Energy Project; National Energy Education Development Project; Marshall County School District; AstroPower, Inc.; Bayer Corp.; Bayview Technology, Inc.; Datapult(SM); Kroger; Watt Stopper, Inc.; and World Energy.

Washington Lands Elementary School also will be highlighted in a 30-minute television documentary produced by the Foundation for Environmental Education. The documentary will be featured on public television later this year and will be distributed to schools nationwide.

AEP, a global energy company, is one of the United States' largest investor-owned utilities, providing energy to 3 million customers in Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. AEP has holdings in the United States, the United Kingdom, China and Australia. Wholly owned subsidiaries provide power engineering, energy consulting and energy management services around the world. The company is based in Columbus, Ohio. On Dec. 22, 1997, AEP announced a definitive merger agreement for a tax-free, stock-for-stock transaction with Central and South West Corp., a public utility holding company based in Dallas.

News releases and other information about AEP can be found on the World Wide Web at <http://www.aep.com>.

SOURCE American Electric Power

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